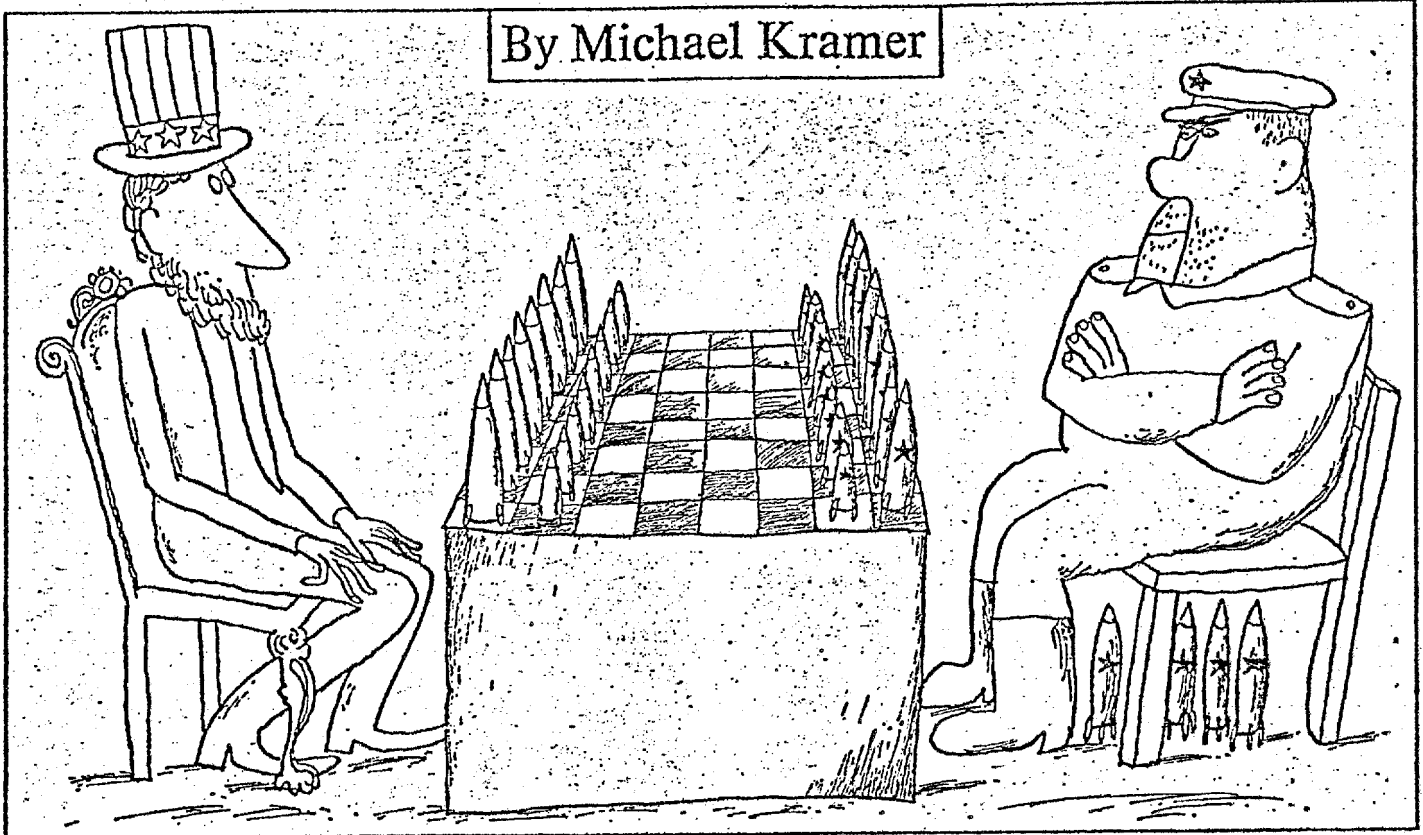


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How to Learn to Start Worrying And Care About SALT

By Michael Kramer



I do have deep reservations about some of the aspects of SALT II, but I think you'll note that when I said deep reservations I was focusing with greater priority on the concept of American defense in the central strategic area and the evolution of thought and the trending toward first parity, and then what we call in the trade "minimum deterrence" or "assured destruction" or "launch on warning concepts," which really place our posture in a position where the Americans have really no alternative but to indulge in population destruction in a crisis with the Soviet Union that's nuclear in character, when you follow the scenario through the doomsday application.

—General Alexander Haig (Retired)

Someone—usually an expert—is almost always saying something like that about the SALT II treaty, which is

Maybe we shouldn't dismiss doomsday scenarios.

probably why no one listens and why more than 50 percent of the respondents in a nationwide poll could not even name the two countries who are parties to the agreement (us and them). But just because most of us don't know anything about SALT doesn't mean it's not important. It is.

The second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) is now before the Senate for ratification. Its chances are iffy—at best. As usual, many of our representatives, the ones we elect to supposedly exercise their judgment, are looking to public opinion (the kind measured by Gallup and company) to clue them in on how to vote. What follows then is a layman's guide to a few of the arguments and issues sur-

rounding SALT, with special emphasis on the question of verification—defined simply as our ability to detect Soviet cheating once the treaty is in effect.

□ **What SALT is not:** SALT is not, as its title would have us believe, an arms-limitation treaty. That goal, a true reduction in Soviet and American arsenals, will come in SALT III—or so say the treaty's proponents. SALT II, say its supporters, and SALT I before it are merely part of a long process, a feeling-out, a dialogue, a way to develop the understanding and trust which will permit true arms control next time—which is what SALT I's proponents originally, and incorrectly, prophesied for SALT II. In any event, as Senator Moynihan has written, "whatever else SALT I might have done, it accomplished little by way of